AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED

IN THE CHURCH AT PRINCETON,

THE EVENING BEFORE THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

SEPTEMBER 24, 1833.

BY RICHARD S. COXE, Esq.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN WHIG AND CLIOSOPHIC SOCIETIES.

PRINCETON:

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETIES, BY BAKER AND CONNOLLY.

1833.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CLIOSOPHIC SOCIETY, AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING, SEPT. 25, 1833.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to present to RICHARD S. COXE, Esq., the thanks of this Society, for the able and eloquent address, delivered by him on Tuesday the 24th instant; and to request a copy for publication.

SAMUEL R. HAMILTON, Esq.,
PROF. ALBERT B. DOD,
DAVID N. BOGART, Esq.,
} *Committee.*

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WILLIAM C. ALEXANDER, Esq.,
PROF. JOSEPH HENRY,
MR. LEWIS P. W. BALCH,
} *Committee.*

AN ADDRESS.

When after the lapse of years, we revisit the scenes of our youth, endeared to our affections by a thousand attracting associations, memory awakens all the circumstances which gave interest and animation to that delightful period of life. Our former companions live again in our recollections: the objects which we had been accustomed to regard with veneration and respect, once more reappear to claim our homage, and the interval of time which has elapsed since our separation, seems like a fleeting shadow or a summer's dream.

To one who was accustomed a quarter of a century since to tread the paths of Nassau Hall, to roam through the adjacent woods and vallies, to trace out the historical and classical incidents with which they are associated, and to invest the whole with those attractions which individual feeling and an intimate connexion with his personal friendships and imaginative aspirations must lend the scene, this place cannot but be rich in interesting recollections. With scarcely an exertion of the fancy he may transport himself back to former days. He may retrace his favorite haunts. He may almost expect at every turn to encounter some companion of his

hours of study or of relaxation, or the venerable instructor, from whose lips he has derived lessons of virtue as well as scientific improvement. These objects of his reverence and affection, are no more to meet his eye: the illusion is dissolved.

> Hactenus annorum comites meorum
> Et memini et meminisse juvat.

The dignified preceptor by whom he had been taught to revere virtue in her mildest form; who blended the refinements of literature and the accomplishments of science with the bland attractions of personal manner and parental kindness, has departed. Those with whom he had been accustomed to mingle in his studies, and in the amusements of the day, are dispersed or dead. All that surrounds him is new. Nought remains to mark the spot, save the impress of nature's hand, and the solid and substantial edifices, whose strength remains unimpaired by time.

The train of thought thus awakened, however full of melancholy, may be nevertheless salutary and beneficial. It is useful occasionally to withdraw our minds from scenes of present and absorbing interest; to view things divested of the false and delusive glare which clothes the objects that surround us; to revert to former days and to compare the anticipations of youth with the realities of a more mature age. It is the dictate of wisdom to review our past progress—to examine the shoals which endangered our career—the rocks which menaced us with ruin—and to revere the skilful hand which directed our footsteps through the dangerous passages of life, and preserved us from that destruction by which we might otherwise have been overwhelmed. It is beneficial to test

the judgments which we formerly passed upon men and things by those which a more enlarged experience has enabled us to form, and thus to draw lessons of wisdom even from the errors and inexperience of our youth.

It was within the precincts of a College that we formed our earliest acquaintance with man: that we learned, however imperfectly, to search beneath the surface of his conduct and his language, and to explore the hidden motives by which he was governed. It was here that we first saw in their incipient stages of developement, the exhibition of those virtues and those talents which have since manifested themselves in a more vigorous growth and upon a more extended theatre. How rarely has it happened that we have been disappointed in our youthful associates. The fond hopes in which parents have indulged, may never be realized; the imperfect views which preceptors have formed, may prove inaccurate; but it is seldom that in the progress of life our early companions have risen much above or been depressed much below our anticipations. The great outlines of individual character—the prominent features which distinguish it from others, begin to display themselves at an early period of life, and they do not commonly elude the observation of those who hourly mingle in all the scenes calculated to develope them. The manly and honorable youth becomes the elevated and honorable man. He who was in early life attracted by the charms of science and of literature, has found his enjoyments augment with the expansion of his mind. The warm and zealous friend may still be seen the object of affectionate solicitude, though years may have found him surrounded by new connexions and by other ties of endearment. The active

enterprise and contempt of danger which we admired amid our sports, have since been exhibited in the martial combat. The lofty aspiration after fame, and the generous devotion to country which have raised our admiration in after life, germinated and struck root within the walls of a College. The progress of time has rather changed in degree, than varied in character—rather modified than essentially altered, either the qualities of the heart or the faculties of the mind.

In the particular course of our lives, the hopes of youth are more rarely realized: the anticipations of the future will seldom be found to harmonize with actual experience. Buoyed up by a youthful fancy—animated by an ardent imagination—we look forward upon the busy scenes of life which we are pressing to enter, with the most sanguine feelings. All its asperities and its irregularities—its abrupt acclivities—its rugged precipices are concealed or softened and melted down, when viewed through the flattering medium which hope presents to our eyes. The imagination throws a mellowing mist over all the roughnesses of the road, and we see in the perspective but a smooth and easy ascent to the pinnacle of our wishes. Many of these beautiful illusions vanish upon a nearer approach. The soft blue with which our hopes had tinged the horizon of life, rounding into graceful curves its distant outline, is too frequently exchanged for the blackness of inaccessible precipices and the dark horrors of a stern reality. Arduous struggles await us where we had looked for an easy progress—bitter enmities where we had anticipated tender attachment—rude repulses have been our portion where we had hoped for invitations of kindness, and envy and calumny have shed their bitterest vials

upon our heads where we had expected friendly encouragement and cordial sympathy. The friends of our youth become estranged or separated, or disappear from our view, before time had hardened the affections of either, like bubbles upon the passing stream: parents, whose hearts we had hoped to gladden and to remunerate for their labors of love, have sunk into the tomb ere our duty was half performed; and when we have reached the meridian of life, we find few remain of all who, we had cherished the expectation, would have cheered us by their smiles of encouragement, rewarded us by their approbation, or soothed the anguish of disappointment.

Even these mournful ideas may be rich in improvement and consolation. The past is not altogether a gloomy barren, nor have the bright beams which gilded the future, been wholly extinguished. When the mind has been properly disciplined, an ample reward is furnished for the most arduous labor, and for a life of devoted privation, in the consoling reflection that a solemn duty has been discharged. The individual who has not fettered himself in the galling chains of an entire selfishness, looks abroad for his highest gratifications. He perceives himself surrounded by human beings possessed of powers and faculties similar to his own; and in the alleviation of their miseries, and the addition which he finds himself able to make to their happiness, discovers new sources of exhaustless felicity. Regarding his country as the scene of all his enjoyments—as holding within her bosom all that is and has been dear to him—he considers himself as engaged in the discharge of obligations, the force of which he freely acknowledges, when he contributes his

exertions to the enlargement of her permanent and substantial good. Taught to aspire from the nothingness of the transient scenes around him, to the infinitely superior attractions of another and a better world, his feelings of philanthropy are submitted to a pure guidance, and gratitude to God stimulates him to renewed efforts to promote the happiness of man. The heart and the understanding are thus purified and strengthened, exalted and enlarged. He learns, not indeed, that happiness is a phantom which eludes the grasp, but that the road which leads to it may be mistaken. He is taught that while some objects of affection are unduly appreciated, the eye is ignorantly closed to the sources of the highest and purest enjoyment.

We have pictured to ourselves a valley of happiness, similar to that which was presented to the view of the youthful Rasselas, where perpetual spring was to gratify our senses with a succession of delightful odours, and where streams were to roll on their silvery waters, unruffled by storms or tempests. We thought "the noiseless foot of time" would "only tread on flowers." If we have learned wisdom from experience, we have been taught that the ever active mind of man would have become attenuated and enfeebled in such a state of existence. We have discovered that we are made for exertion, and that in the vigorous application of his powers, moral and intellectual, man attains the most exalted happiness, and best performs the duties of his being.

The constitution of his nature has imposed upon him the necessity for continued action. This paramount law of his being, he can neither elude nor violate. No matter in what clime his lot may have been cast—no matter whether fortune

may have smiled or frowned upon his birth—no matter how the adventitious distinctions of rank may have elevated or depressed him in society—whether a monarch or a peasant—a freeman or a slave—his life is not one of listless inactivity. Indolence would poison every source of enjoyment, and would invest with still darker gloom the storms of adverse fate. Active exertion gives a zest to life—augments its pleasures—mitigates its calamities. Virtue cannot exist, deprived of its firm support, and vice loses all those qualities which rescue it from contempt when it sinks into the languor of repose.

It becomes then a matter of infinite moment, that this disposition to activity should assume a rational and proper direction. Hence arise the advantages of education. This is the basis upon which must rest all those institutions which adorn our land; reared for the purposes of instruction, and dedicated to the advancement of youth. Surrounded as we are in this place, by the memorials and the fruits of science and of literature, we cannot be insensible to the advantages of early education. If we look around us and survey the present situation, or the past history of our country, we cannot fail to be impressed with the conviction that a large proportion of that talent which adorns it—that science which illustrates it—and that virtue which beautifies it—drew their first nourishment within the walls of our various seminaries of learning. Should we extend our view into the more retired scenes of domestic life—contemplate the familiar intercourse of society—explore the haunts of vice—we shall again perceive to how large an extent individual and social happiness is connected with early instruction, and how much of that which debases and degrades the individual, and contami-

nates the society of which he forms a part, may be traced to a total destitution or an erroneous system of youthful education. Trained with care and under the guidance of virtue, the native powers of man will expand into a vigorous growth, and produce a splendid harvest of usefulness and beneficence: allowed to pursue their own career, or deflected from the straight course by false and erroneous systems, the virulence of their poison augments with their increase in stature, and they spread desolation as wide as their pernicious shades extend.

The individual who regards the gratification of his own ambitious aspirations, as the end and object of his existence, may learn from the history of the world, that the most conspicuous niches in the temple of fame have been reserved for those, who have most distinguished themselves by their genius and skill in intellectual pursuits, and by their efforts to promote the substantial benefit of man. The heroes and demi-gods of the corrupt mythology of the ancients, owed their elevation as much to the beneficent objects of their achievements, as to the prowess and valor with which they were conducted. Although history is too generally a mere narrative of crimes and miseries, and particularly in ancient times, rarely dwells with much complacency upon the state of society, or the progress of literature :—though the melody of the poet is hushed by the din of arms, and the pursuits which promote the happiness of the species, yield to those which minister to their destruction, yet it is the poet and the historian—the sculptor and the painter, who have given to the conqueror and the hero all of the life which they enjoy in after ages. The memorials which they themselves have created, are the solitude and the desert—the wailings of

afflicted humanity, and the bitter tears of bereavement. Notwithstanding that the love of excitement is the master spring of human action—that the fury of the storm abstracts our minds from the placid serenity of nature in her milder moods;—that "the earthquake shout of victory—the rapture of the strife," seem more congenial to the heart of man, than

> "———————— the olive grove of Academe,—
> Plato's retirement,—where the attic bird
> Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long"—

there is nevertheless an antagonist principle at work which furnishes a palliative, if not a cure for this morbid propensity.

The earliest settlements of Greece were planted upon a barbarous and hostile shore. Her infant feebleness was forced into contests upon which her precarious existence hung. Her struggles increased with her years, and the whole period of her glorious career was an unbroken succession of foreign and domestic conflicts. Yet, though trained amid scenes where the art of war became the first among the necessary avocations of her sons,

> "Unto us she hath a spell, beyond
> Her name in story."

It was in her prolific soil that the seeds were sown which expanded into such glorious fruits of genius and philosophy. The fame of her Homer is the brighest ornament in the chaplet of her renown. Her orators, poets, historians and philosophers, blend themselves with our recollections of the past, and give a color to our anticipations of the future. The eloquence of Demosthenes has diffused his name more widely than that of Philip, and Aristotle achieved a more extensive conquest, and built up a more permanent empire, than was

won by his illustrious pupil. The names of Marathon and Thermopylæ, may sometimes kindle our imaginations, but the perusal of her literature and her science, improves the taste, expands the intellect, and multiplies and heightens our enjoyments. The glory of Greece exists only in the written memorials of her genius.

In ancient Rome, peculiarly and emphatically warlike, cradled in armor and nurtured with blood, the same indications are visible. Cicero, Livy, Virgil and Horace, have obscured the glory of Camillus, of Scipio, and almost of the Cæsars. The influence of Roman literature is felt wherever letters are known. But the Imperial City enjoys a supremacy of an analogous kind, which constitutes one of the most singular monuments of the paramount importance of mind. Her code of laws, a stupendous production of intellect, has exercised a sway more extensive than her arms. Its power is recognized thoughout empires where the eagle of her legions was never displayed, even in the palmy days of her prosperity, when historic truth might almost have employed the poet's boast,

Romanæ spatium est urbis et orbis idem.

Its influence has been expanding during those centuries which have witnessed the humiliating submission of Rome herself to the ferocious Alaric and the modern Hun. Its dominion is not only still controlling in the larger portion of Europe, but this judicial polity is engrafted upon our own free institutions, and serves as the basis of every code throughout our Southern continent. An empire more extensive and durable, an influence more expanded and more beneficial, than has ever been achieved by merely human power.

Throughout modern Europe, similar results have been developed. All have learned the names of Spenser and of Shakspeare—of Milton and of Bacon—of Newton and of Locke—while the glory of their military contemporaries is already shorn of its beams. Pope and Dryden, Racine and Voltaire, are familiar to our ears as household words; while Marlborough and Eugene, Conde and Turenne, are heard only at intervals. The family of Medici, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto, are still brilliant luminaries in the constellation of literature, while the gallant warriors of the day have fallen like evanescent meteors upon the dead pall of night.

All experience tends to the establishment of the truth, that national glory is more signally illustrated, and personal fame more durably fixed, upon the firm basis of literary and scientific achievements, than upon the most splendid feats in arms. As man improves in intelligence, such must continue to be the case. The fame of the poet the orator and the philosopher, will expand with the diffusion of knowledge, and become more conspicuous as letters become more highly esteemed. Every augmentation of the empire of mind must enlarge the foundations upon which it rests.

To the mere aspirant after worldly distinctions—to him who has no higher ambition or more glorious hope than that of securing to himself an honorable existence in history—this is the field in which he may most securely calculate upon a rich harvest of renown. Should he enlarge his views beyond the circumscribed horizon of personal and selfish interests:—should he feel stimulated by an ardent desire to promote the happiness of his fellow-men:—should he be animated by a lofty and inextinguishable zeal to advance the best interests

of the country, which ranks him among her sons, he will find all these excitements to action—all these rewards for exertion in promoting the progress of science. An enlarged political wisdom will teach him that the career of national prosperity and individual happiness is accelerated by such auxiliaries. War is sometimes, in the mysterious wisdom of Providence, a necessary means of dissipating the sluggish *malaria* of despotic encroachment, and of purifying the atmosphere of liberty; but like the magnificent agents of the natural world, which perform analogous functions, it is itself replete with horrors. War has no creative faculties—all its tendencies are destructive.

The understandings of men are becoming enlightened on this subject. Within a few years past indications of a more healthy state of the public intelligence have exhibited themselves. The mind of man is throwing off the fetters in which it had long been bound. Nation is carrying on with nation, and individual with individual, the glorious contest and striving for victory in arts and science. Literature, no longer confined within her accustomed channels, limiting her influences to a compartively few, has risen, until elevated above the mounds and embankments which had restrained her career, she has spread her fertilizing waters over a wide expanse. Her course is marked with a new and luxuriant vegetation. The elements of education are diffused throughout the land, and are understood in every hamlet. Who can contemplate the present aspect of the world without amazement, and who is gifted with the prophetic spirit which can look into the womb of time and measure the results which are to be developed?

The intellects of the ablest and wisest men have been roused by this new attitude of things. In delineating the effects already exhibited, and the causes which have produced them, they are preparing the way for still grander improvements. A potent engine whose unknown energies had been for centuries quiescent, has been set in motion; millions of minds, emancipated from their accustomed restraints, are moving as by one mighty impulse, and pressing forward in this novel and interesting career.

In what is all this to terminate? Who can dare to fix limits to this glorious change? If so much has been accomplished in days that have gone by, when education was confined to a favored few—when nurseries of intellect were scattered at remote distances, throughout even the most intelligent portion of the world, like beacons upon a dark and barren coast, making the general obscurity still more palpable —when the press was unknown, or fettered by every manacle which could shackle its energies—when masses of force were employed by despotic and feudal tyranny, to stifle every impulse, and to check every movement—what results may not be anticipated when this elastic power, no longer pent up by artificial restraints, is set free to act, with the whole universe as the field of its operations, and the unrepressed energy of man, the force which impels the mighty machine. May the Being who has created it, preside over and control its motions, and give them a direction favorable to the improvement of the human race, equally in virtue and in intelligence.

The claims which are presented by the present position of the world, upon individual exertion, are not more obvious than the facilities which are furnished for the discharge of

these high obligations. One of the most signal characteristics of modern times, is exhibited in the enlargement of the objects of intellectual pursuit. New fields have been opened for philosophical inquiry, while the old ones continue to be cultivated with zeal and success. All that is valuable in the science and learning of former days, has been preserved and improved, while new regions have been discovered and explored by the enterprising modern. Classical literature, more particularly in the oriental department, has been amply illustrated by the indefatigable scholars of the last half century; and Germany, England and France, have sustained their well-earned reputation. Mathematical pursuits have been encouraged by new impulses. The tremendous conflicts in which nations have been engaged, have carried, to a high degree of perfection, the science of war with which the mathematics are nearly connected. The extension of commerce, and the excitement of rival enterprise, have pushed forward, with equal vigor, the art of navigation, and the auxiliary departments of learning; while the strenuous exertions which have been made to explore and to develope the internal resources of different nations, by the instrumentality of schemes of inland communication, have, in another field, furnished an equal stimulant and reward for a similar description of talent. In no former period of the world has the science of engineering—as well civil as military—approximated so nearly to perfection, and in none have the practical manifestations of its utility been so distinctly exhibited. In the loftier branches of the mathematics, allusion need only be made to the names of La Place and Bowditch, as proof that Newton and Euler have left no vacuum behind them.

Perhaps in nothing has this modern developement of talent been more strikingly exhibited than in the improvements which have occurred in practical mechanics. Your attention need not be particularly pointed to the almost infinite variety of useful inventions which may be found in every dwelling, and in every scene of manual labor, and which are treasured up in the public repositories of the evidences of modern ingenuity. The perfection to which labor-saving machinery has been brought, the innumerable objects to which it is applied, and the almost incredible effects which it has accomplished, can be only thus briefly noticed. The improvement, and virtually the invention, of the steam engine, is the work of recent years, and its powerful as well as its minute efficiency constitutes the period of its introduction an epoch in the history of the world. It would almost seem to have afforded to man an instrument by which to move the globe, while it enables him to execute the most complex operations with the smallest atoms. By it, his physical power has been augmented to an incalculable extent, while it has equally contributed to increase and to disseminate comfort and intelligence.

Never before did the members of the learned professions, as they have been termed, though the grounds of this distinction have ceased to exist, stand more eminently distinguished for the variety and extent of their acquirements. The most valuable commentaries upon the scriptures—the illustrations of their meaning, which have been sought and discovered in the history and antiquities of the Eastern nations;—the powerful aid, which has been derived from profane literature and the improvements in science, to enforce and establish their divine origin—the fidelity of their narratives, and the fulfilment of

their prophecies, have exhibited the modern defenders of the faith in high relief. During the same period the medical profession has been illustrated by some of the most brilliant names which its entire history presents; and it never occupied a higher rank than it now holds, either for the variety or the profundity of the acquirements by which its members have long been eminently conspicuous. Many circumstances have combined to elevate the profession of the law in a proportionate degree. The convulsions which have shaken the civilized world to its centre—the rise and fall of states—the disruption of those ties which formerly held nations under some degree of restraint—the character of the measures adopted for the enforcement of belligerent claims, and for the ascertainment and vindication of neutral rights, have tasked all the learning and intellect of the bar and the bench, as well as of practical statesmen, to a wider and deeper inquiry into the origin, the foundations, and the principles of international law, than any previous period in the history of man required. The vast extension of commerce, the infinite variety of contracts and the multifarious connexions to which it has given birth, have furnished the occasion, as well as prescribed the necessity for giving a scientific and systematic form to that large and important branch of the law which relates to these complex subjects. Independently of these circumstances, the strengthening of the connexion between the different departments of government, though administered by various hands; the wide field which has been opened under free and liberal institutions, more especially our own, for the discussion of questions growing out of those constitutions upon which depend the political organization of states, have caused a more thorough

investigation to be made into the foundations of civil society, the fundamental laws of government, and the relative rights and duties of the people, and those by whom their affairs are administered, than man ever before felt inclined, or indeed was permitted to make. It would not perhaps be going too far to affirm, that the laws of American jurists have already contributed more to illustrate the subjects to which reference has just been made, and to establish them upon a solid and substantial basis, than the combined exertions of all the writers of antiquity.

Should we extend our view to what are usually denominated the fields of lighter literature, we cannot fail to be struck with the manifestations of modern intellect. Since the commencement of the present century, this department has been embellished by an Edgeworth, a Scott, our own Irving and Cooper; while Byron, rivalling Dante in his mysterious sublimity, despite his profligacy and his crimes, has stamped with his enduring name the poetic age in which he flourished.

Independently of these objects of intellectual pursuit, which have for ages attracted their respective votaries, there are other fields for the exercise of mind which may almost literally be said to have been discovered within the brief period of a century. Linnæus may well be termed the father of botany, as it is now understood. Scarcely one hundred years have elapsed since his name was first faintly heard in a narrow part of his native land, and already botany has assumed an equal station among the sciences. Hundreds of enterprising and untiring followers are now scattered over the world, exploring every desert, every moun-

tain, and every rivulet between the poles, and furnishing their contributions to increase the enjoyments of the lover of nature, and to minister to the necessities, the comfort and the luxury of man. Natural history has attracted her proportion of votaries, and is improving in an equal ratio. Chemistry, drawing its origin from the crude and irrational pursuits of the deceived and deceiving alchymist, has attained an equal elevation. Her influences are felt in the improvements of agriculture and the arts, while they extend to the every day enjoyments of every member of a civilized community. Geology and mineralogy, under the guidance of a sound philosophy, have awakened a kindred interest in the mind of intellectual man, and the inmost recesses and profoundest depths of the earth are explored, to beautify and adorn its exterior.

Nor is this enlargement of the boundaries of science the only remarkable characteristic of the times in which we live. The height to which it has been carried, is not more striking than the extent to which it has been spread. The breadth of the foundation bears a fair proportion to the towering elevation of the edifice. The loftiest intellects and the most profound acquirements have been devoted as well to smooth the ascent up the road they have journeyed, as to push forward into new paths of exploration. In every department of science the elementary treatises and modes of instruction, which are designed to open the portals within which its mysteries are enshrined, have become numerous and perspicuous beyond all former example. Facilities for acquiring the fundamental principles of every science, are accessible to each member of the community. Instead of being enshrouded

within the recesses of a cloister, or the profound seclusion of a College, philosophy now walks abroad; she holds up the page of knowledge to each individual, and points out to him, in every object which surrounds him, the means of improvement. The great ends of education are better comprehended, and the means more skilfully applied. The mere acquisition of ideas from the exterior world, is without value. The mind into which the stream of knowledge is poured, must be fertilized by its living waters, or they will prove of little worth. The opinions of others, and the facts which are accumulated, must be the instruments with which, and the elements upon which, it exercises its own faculties—its powers of analysis and combination, comparison and judgment. There must exist an animating and informing spirit, which shall bring together the crude materials—reduce them to symmetry—arrange them into order, and breathe into them a living soul.

It cannot escape the notice of any observer of the present situation of the scientific and literary world, that the character of modern improvement is intimately connected with practical utility. The mind of man has not been enriched with any new faculties; it has been not so much strengthened and invigorated as it has received a new direction. The studies which were calculated merely to gratify a vain curiosity—to call into exercise the powers of a refining and scholastic subtlety, which had no connexion with the permanent good of the species—have fallen into desuetude. If we contrast the subjects about which men were curious and inquisitive during the middle ages, with those which now engage their attention, we shall plainly perceive that to the diversity

between the objects of their pursuit and to their different modes of philosophising, may be traced much of what distinguishes the one era from the other. At the earlier period, the inductive philosophy was unknown. The mind was incessantly upon the rack, in speculations which exercised its ingenuity in metaphysical refinements, but which produced no practical or beneficial result. In such employments, miscalled philosophical, the distinctive characteristic of man was lost; no individual was aided in his progress by the advances which his contemporaries had made; no generation smoothed the path of its successor. All movement was personal, and discoveries which modern times have applied to useful purposes, were neglected and contemned when they lay insulated and disjoined.

Under the guidance of a sound philosophy, every step which each individual makes, facilitates the general advance. Every augmentation of knowledge is a contribution to a common stock. Each generation comes as it were by inheritance into the possession of this rich accumulation of preceding centuries, and bequeaths it, not merely unimpaired, but essentially increased in value, to those who are to come after. Such is the character of genuine philosophy;—such is its character in the present age. In discharging the high obligations thus conferred upon us, every aim should be directed to the useful—the practically—the essentially useful. Every vista in the ample domain of science should lead to a temple dedicated to the benefit of man.

Upon a superficial view, danger might be apprehended, lest in the exclusive search after what is merely useful, much that is glorious and ennobling should be overlooked. If

such an anticipation ever existed, experience and a close observation must dissipate the groundless fear. An enlarged and liberal view has been taken of the matter :—a philosophical and comprehensive survey has been made of the whole field of science. Immediate and obvious good has not alone been sought. The intimate connexion which subsists between the different objects of intellectual pursuit—even those at first view the most widely separated—has been explored and exhibited. The golden chain has been traced, which binds together, in one harmonious whole, the entire circle of the sciences, causing them to revolve with perfect regularity round the fixed centre of truth. It has been perceived and felt, and acknowledged, that they are not insulated and disconnected, but that they constitute parts of one magnificent and entire system, mutually contributing to each other's orderly movements, and mutually receiving andc ommunicating light and heat. The graces of a beautiful literature, the coruscations of genius, and the refinements of taste, are appreciated, not merely as ornamental embellishments, but as useful adjuncts, and even necessary appendages. Taking an extensive view of man, his capacities and his faculties, looking to the sources of his purest enjoyments, and the foundations of his substantial happiness, every thing which has a tendency to enlarge his powers—to elevate his conceptions—to purify and refine his taste, or to augment the number of his intellectual and moral pleasures, is deserving of that degree of his attention to which its comparative influence, in the accomplishment of these ends, entitles it.

In the scientific world the minute subdivisions of labor are

no longer the objects of scrupulous vigilance. In the purely mechanical employments they have been found eminently useful, if not essentially necessary. Even there, however, they have a tendency to cramp the mind, and to reduce its naturally gigantic and expansive powers within the narrow limits, and submit it to the enfeebling regulations of mere machinery. Such tendencies are wholly at war with the very genius of philosophy. By that we are taught that there is a lofty and spacious dome, of which the various sciences are the supporting columns, which partakes of the strength and of the character which each communicates. The magnificent truth which Bacon promulgated, is now universally recognized. "Prospectationes fiunt a turribus aut locis prælaltis, et impossibile est ut quis exploret remotiores interioresque scientiæ alicujus partes, si stet super plano ejusdem scientiæ, neque altioris scientiæ veluti speculum conscendat."

In taking even this rapid and necessarily very imperfect view of the present state of the scientific world, the inducements and facilities which it holds out to increased exertion to promote its cause, and the hopes which it furnishes of its future prosperity, it would be unpardonable before such an audience and upon this theatre, to omit to notice the intimate connexion which subsists between the progress of the human mind and the advancement in political privileges. The great ruling power to which men submit, and before which monarchs are compelled to bow, is public opinion. In proportion as men advance in knowledge,—in proportion as that knowledge is disseminated, the conduct of rulers is subjected to a more jealous scrutiny; the rights of individuals are more thoroughly understood, and more

assiduously watched, and as public opinion becomes more enlightened it becomes more efficient. Every improvement of intellect—every increase in the dissemination of intelligence, enlarges the influence which public opinion exercises over those transactions which affect communities, and over the individuals who control the interests of nations. Men act upon a loftier stage and in a broader theatre. The eyes of the reflecting and intelligent portion of mankind are upon them, to scan their actions and to scrutinize their conduct. A judgment as sure and as just as that which was pronounced over the graves of the monarchs of Egypt, now proclaims the meed of praise or censure which an impartial public opinion has awarded to living men. No despot is so shrouded within the recesses of his palace, but that this public opinion will make itself heard; none so ensconced behind his battlements, or surrounded by his mercenaries, but that it will make itself obeyed.

The principles thus brought into action are in rapid progress throughout the world. In Great Britain, they serve as the only basis upon which their entire institutions rest. The turrets of feudal tyranny are mouldering into dust—the stupendous buttresses which had been erected to sustain the monarch—the hierarchy and the nobility, already require extraneous supports to preserve them from falling into utter dilapidation. France, during the last half century, has coursed the rounds of rude and desultory efforts to incorporate freedom into her institutions, and must fail in every attempt, until she can succeed in establishing the only solid foundation of every free government, an enlightened public opinion. Prussia and Germany appear to be smothering with ashes the inextin-

guishable sparks of liberty; and the shores of the Baltic and the Mediterranean have witnessed the convulsive throes which presage the tremendous struggle in which public opinion is to strive for the mastery. The same mighty power has effected a lodgment in the strong holds of the Moslem; it is now operating within the walls of Constantinople, and Egypt has recognised the existence and the influence of this potent engine.

In all these countries, public opinion, however crude in its character, and wrong in its conceptions, is in advance of the government, and has assumed an attitude hostile to existing institutions. The rulers are aware of the dangers which menace them, and are striving to strangle this infant Hercules in his cradle. But the fountains of the great deep have been broken up—the elements of knowledge have been too widely scattered to be exterminated, and while they retain the vital energy with which they are imbued, they will strike their roots into every rock, and spring up in luxuriant growth in every valley, where the winds of heaven may waft them. The overwhelming power of an armed despot may here and there crush the efforts of men determined to be free, but experience will sooner or later teach them that the stream of liberty, though compelled to hide itself for a time in one region, yet, like the fabled fountain of Arethusa, will pour forth its waters with renovated vigor and pristine purity in another.

In this blessed country, no such strugle awaits us. We have long been in the actual fruition of entire freedom. That public opinion, which is, in less favored climes, the most dangerous foe of existing institutions, is the cherished friend

and powerful auxiliary of our own. That improvement in science, that diffusion of knowledge which are elsewhere regarded with jealousy and distrust, are here stimulated and encouraged by every motive which can rouse men and patriots to exertion. In Europe, we have seen royal decrees interdicting the general diffusion of knowledge;—here the public treasure is, as a measure of permanent policy, appropriated to its furtherance. Throughout the old world, the influence of enlightened intelligence tends to demolish or reform the frame of government;—here it is united and active to sustain the fabric of our free institutions. Upon us has devolved the high and responsible duty of preserving that constitution and that liberty, which we deem inseparable ; and in the enjoyment of which, all participate. If the galling yoke of servitude disqualifies men for freedom, let it not be said—and our history vouched to sustain the assertion —that liberty only makes them fit for slavery. If, in other countries, the strong arm of power is constantly on the alert to restrain the energies of man—to close the door to his improvement—to bind his mind in fetters—here, where our course is free, and our march unrestrained—let it be made apparent, that if a competent degree of intelligence is essential to the proper use of liberty, this necessary aliment is the spontaneous growth of free institutions. If, in the old world, under every discouragement, individuals will devote themselves to the cultivation of letters—prompted to the task by a desire to find a support for their youth, a comfort for their declining age, an embellishment for their prosperous fortunes, and a solace in their adversity—let us, while not unmindful of these motives for cherishing them, regard them with additional

favor as the sacred palladium whose presence furnishes ample security to our country's citadel.

The essential principle upon which our government rests, that which distinguishes it from all which have preceded it, is, that the people possess the right and enjoy the power of forming their own judgment upon all measures of public policy, and of selecting objects of their own choice for the management of their affairs. The legislative and executive departments are but the exponents of the general will, and the enactment of laws is but the clothing the same expression in proper form, and attaching to it specific sanctions. If the depositaries of public confidence were of themselves to administer the powers with which the nation is invested; were they to be able to wield a force which could command submission to their measures, it would soon be discovered that the power of removing such as might prove unfaithful, was an empty shadow, and the ballot box an idle bubble. Public opinion is the only controlling influence known in our country: no law can be enforced, no measure persevered in, contrary to its dictates, or independently of its sanction. The whole executive power would be feeble without its aid, and the judiciary could not execute a single judgment if deprived of its support.

Under such institutions, those who are chosen by the people, to fill stations of dignity and power, are usually selected in consequence of a real or supposed congeniality of character, sympathy of feeling, and identity of principle, between them and their constituents. They not merely represent the wishes, but they may be regarded as an accurate standard by which to measure the virtue and intelligence which exist among the

people. The higher the latter are elevated in intellect, and the more thoroughly they are imbued with sound principles, the loftier will be the grade of qualification exacted of such as present themselves as candidates for public favor.

These considerations open an ample field for calm and deliberate reflection, which our limited time forbids us to explore. The jealous character of the American people has wisely induced them to avoid standing armies of hired mercenaries, or to raise up a distinct and separate class in the community to defend us against foreign aggression. Every citizen is inured to the use of arms; in the individual valor of our countrymen we repose our principal security, as the military defence of the nation. How infinitely more important a safeguard may they be rendered against the dangers which menace all free governments, if furnished with the arms of political warfare, and skilled by experience in their use. These arms are supplied by education; every citizen entitled to exercise the elective franchise, should be trained to their employment, and habituated to canvass the measures of the government, in all its departments, with the circumspection which duty demands, and with the freedom that becomes enlightened and intelligent votaries of liberty.

Imperfect and inaccurate estimates of these important and vital duties, are not less to be deprecated than entire ignorance. More is required for their faithful and beneficial fulfilment, than mere intellectual improvement. Acuteness of mind, and a vigilant regard to public affairs, will not always render a man a more valuable citizen. It is far more essential that he should possess sound and virtuous principles. To confer intelligence upon a vicious man, only

renders him more dangerous to the community. Knowledge is power; but it is a power which may be wielded either as a blessing or a curse, accordingly as it is directed by virtue or by vice. Artful demagogues may mislead an ignorant populace; a corrupt one is already a fit tool for their incendiary plans: a virtuous people, instructed in its rights, is secure against their deleterious influence. The welfare of nations is far more closely connected with the general dissemination of sound principles of action, than with the advancement of mere intelligence. It has too frequently happened, that ages and countries, most distinguished for intellectual vigor and refinement, have been disgraced by the most open and undisguised licentiousness of manners; but history furnishes no example of a people being deprived of freedom, until vice and corruption had betrayed its essential defences, and opened the gates for the invasion of the foreign foe.

It has been profoundly and judiciously remarked, that the only accurate knowledge which man possesses, of the surface of the earth, has been derived from the previous knowledge which he had acquired of the phenomena of the stars; with at least equal truth, may it be affirmed that all the correct information which he has of his duties to himself—his family —his country, and his species, has been derived from light communicated from heaven.

Every page of history illustrates the connexion which a wise Providence has established between private virtue and national prosperity. The great stream of modern improvement may be traced back to the christian religion as its principal source. That religion has breathed its benignant spirit into the code of international law, and ameliorated,

where it has not exterminated, the barbarous and cruel practices of war which offended humanity. It has controlled the evil propensities of tyrants, and mitigated the oppression of despotism. It has calmed the excited passions of the multitude when roused to vindicate their rights; and to its benign influence may be attributed the extraordinary spectacles, which modern and christian countries have alone exhibited, of revolutions accomplished without murder, and civil wars waged without a massacre. It has contributed to foster a bold and undaunted spirit of independence—a determined and resolute resistance to tyranny in all its shapes. It has rendered men better qualified to enjoy freedom when acquired, and more zealous to defend it with energy when assailed. It has equally contributed to purify and enlighten public opinion, and to confer upon it that paramount influence which it now possesses. All its tendencies, when not swayed by the corrupting passions of men, are salutary and invigorating. The very origin of christianity, its vital and pervading principle, is unbounded love to man; its most conspicuous event was proclaimed from heaven, amid the shouts of angels, announcing this as its end and object, and its fruits are the advancement of human happiness in its most comprehensive and elevated signification.

The venerable institution with which we are connected, owed its establishment to the philanthrophical views of its founders. The influence of religion was its origin—the benefit of man its aim. The fathers of our country perceived and acknowledged, that to heaven they looked for succor and support in every kind of peril and of difficulty; and with pious confidence they invoked its blessings upon all

their great undertakings. These eminent examples are worthy of our humble imitation. We may rest assured that when religious education shall become universally diffused throughout our land—when every citizen of this great nation shall be instructed in the pure and unadulterated doctrines of christianity, the American people may well deem themselves equally and effectually secured, against foreign aggression and domestic convulsion. The same Being who made, will preserve us a nation. Our free institutions will rest upon the rock of ages—a foundation which can never fail—and our countrymen will prove themselves eminently worthy of the many and inestimable blessings, which have been showered upon them by a beneficent Providence.